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BEQUEST OF

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Miss Putnam

UNA AND THE LION.

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BY

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

CAMBRIDGE:

Riverside Press.

1871.

her Una, if you please; for, when her whole life and image rise before me, so far from thinking the story of Una and her lion a myth, I say here is Una in real flesh and blood — Una and her paupers, far more untamable than lions.

The graceful, tender legends of Catholic saints and martyrs — why call them *Roman* Catholic? — have not a greater miracle than we have here in the flesh. She lived the life, and died the death of the saints and martyrs; though the greatest sinner would not have been more surprised than she to have heard this said of herself. In less than three years she had reduced one of the most disorderly hospital populations in the world to something like Christian discipline, such as the police themselves wondered at. She had led, so as to be of one mind and heart with her, upwards of fifty nurses and probationers; of whom the faithful few whom she took with her of our trained nurses were but a seed. She had converted a vestry to the conviction of the economy as well as humanity of nursing pauper sick by trained nurses, — the first instance of the kind in England; for vestries, of whom she had almost the most enlightened, the most liberal body of men in England to support her, *must* look after the pockets of their rate-payers as well as the benefit of their sick. But, indeed, the superstition seems now to be exploding, that to

neglect sick paupers is the way to keep down pauperism. She had converted the Poor-Law Board — a body, perhaps, not usually given to much enthusiasm about Unas and paupers — to these views; two of whom bore witness to this effect.

She had disarmed all opposition, all sectarian zealotism; so that Roman Catholic and Unitarian, High Church and Low Church, all literally rose up and called her "blessed." Churchwardens led the way in the vestry-meeting which was held in her honor after her death; and really affecting speeches, made while moving the resolution of condolence (no mere form) to her family, were the tribute to her public service. All, of all shades of religious creed, seemed to have merged their differences in her, seeing in her the one true essential thing, compared with which they acknowledged their differences to be as nothing. And aged paupers made verses in her honor after her death.

In less than three years — the time generally given to the ministry on earth of that Saviour whom she so earnestly strove closely to follow — she did all this. She had the gracefulness, the wit, the unfailing cheerfulness — qualities so remarkable but so much overlooked in our Saviour's life. She had the absence of all asceticism, or "mortification," for mortification's sake,

which characterized his work, and any real work in the present day as in his day. And how did she do all this? She was not, when a girl, of any conspicuous ability, except that she had cultivated in herself to the utmost a power of getting through business in a short time, without slurring it over and without fid-fadding at it — real business — her Father's business. She was always filled with the thought that she must be about her "Father's business." How can any undervalue business habits? as if anything could be done without them. She could do, and she did do, more of her Father's business in six hours than ordinary women do in six months, or than most of even the best women do in six days. But, besides this and including this, she had trained herself to the utmost — she was always training herself; for this is no holiday work. Nursing is an art; and, if it is to be made an art, requires as exclusive a devotion, as hard a preparation, as any painter's or sculptor's work; for what is the having to do with dead canvas or cold marble, compared with having to do with the living body — the temple of God's spirit? It is one of the Fine Arts; I had almost said, the finest of the Fine Arts. I have seen somewhere in print, that nursing is a profession to be followed by the "lower middle-class." Shall we say that painting or sculpture is a profession to

be followed by the "lower middle-class"? Why limit the class at all? Or shall we say that God is only to be served in his sick by the "lower middle-class"? The poorest child without shoes, the most highly-born, have alike followed all these professions with success, have alike had to undergo the hardest work, if for success. There is no such thing as amateur art; there is no such thing as amateur nursing.[1]

I return to the training which this servant of God gave herself.

Before she came to us, she had been at Kaiserswerth, and already knew more than most hospital matrons know when they undertake matronship. She was some time with the Bible-women in London. Overdone with cares and business, I had lost sight of her, when I was taken by surprise at hearing from our training-school at St. Thomas' Hospital that she had asked for

[1] It appears to be the most futile of all distinctions to classify as between "paid" and unpaid art, so between "paid" and unpaid nursing — to make into a test a circumstance as adventitious as whether the hair is black or brown, namely, whether people have private means or not, whether they are obliged or not to work at their art or their nursing for a livelihood. Probably no person ever did that well which he did only for money. Certainly no person ever did that well which he did not work at as hard as if he did it solely for money. If by amateurs in art or in nursing are meant those who take it up for play, it is not art at all, it is not nursing at all. You never yet made an artist by paying him well. But — an artist ought to be well paid.

admittance there to have a year's training, a step entirely unprompted by us. She told me afterwards that she felt, when she had entered there, as if she knew nothing. While there, she went through all the training of a nurse. Her reports of cases were admirable as to nursing details. She was our best pupil: she went through all the work of a soldier; and she thereby fitted herself for being the best general we ever had.

Many a time, in her after life at the workhouse, she wrote, that without her training at St. Thomas' Hospital, she could have done nothing. Unless a superintendent herself knows what the nurses she has to superintend ought to do, she is always at a loss. She is never sure of her work. She must be herself the measure of their work. In a work-house, she said, this must be preëminently the case — more even than in a hospital — because on a work-house infirmary matron fall many more of the decisions as to petty medical matters than on a London hospital matron, where the medical and surgical staff are much more numerous and constant.

"Without a regular hard *London* hospital training I should have been 'nowhere,'" she used to say.

She was fond of telling her obligations to our admirable matron at St. Thomas' Hospital. I need, however, but to recall one thing. This

very year that she was taken from us, she had intended to have "two months' more training" at St. Thomas' Hospital, as soon as she could safely take "a holiday" — what a holiday! — after three weeks with her dear mother and sister. She said she should learn "so much" now, having won her experience, if she had "a little more training."

Dear fellow countrywomen, if any of you are unwilling to leave a loved and happy home, if any of you are unwilling to give up a beloved daughter or sister, know that this servant of God had a home as fair and happy as any, which she loved beyond all created things, and that her mother and sister gave her up to do God's work. Upon the awful character of that sacrifice I cannot speak. They "gave her" (and it) "to God."

I will return to her work at the work-house. How did she do it all? She did it simply by the manifestation of the life which was in her — the trained, well-ordered life of doing her Father's business — so different from the governing, the ordering about, the driving principle. And everybody recognized it — the paupers, and the vestry, and the nurses, and the Poor-Law Board. As for the nurses (those who understood her), her influence with them was unbounded. They would have died for her. Because they always felt that she cared for them, not merely as instru-

ments of the work, but for each one in herself; not because she wished for popularity or praise among them, but solely for their own well-being. She had *no* care for praise in her at all. But (or rather because of this) she had a greater power of carrying her followers with her than any woman (or man) I ever knew. And she never seemed to know that she was doing anything remarkable.

It seems unnatural that I should be writing her "In Memoriam," I who have been a prisoner to my roof from illness for years, and she so full of health and vigor till almost the last. Within sixteen days of her death I received a letter from her, full of all her own energy about work-house affairs, and mentioning her illness, which had begun, but bidding me "not be anxious." But this is not an "In Memoriam," it is a war-cry — a war-cry such as she would have bid me write; a cry for successors to fill her place, to fill up the ranks.

O, fellow countrywomen, why do you hang back? Why are there so few of you? We hear so much of "idle hands and unsatisfied hearts," and nowhere more than in England. All England is ringing with the cry for "Woman's Work" and Woman's Mission." Why are there so few to *do* the "work"? We used to hear of people giving their blood for their country.

Since when is it that they only give their ink? We now have in England this most extraordinary state of things — England, who is, or thinks herself the most religious and the most commercial country in the world. New hospitals, new asylums, new nurses' homes, and societies for nursing the sick poor at home, are rising everywhere. People are always willing to give their money for these. The Poor-Law Board, the Boards of Guardians, are willing, or compelled, to spend money for separate asylums for work-house sick. An Act was passed last year for the metropolis to this effect. It is proposed to extend it to the whole country. This Act, although miserably inadequate, still inaugurates a new order of things, namely, that the work-house sick shall not be work-house inmates, not be cared for as mere work-house inmates, but that they shall be poor sick, cared for as sick who are to be cured, if possible, and treated as becomes a Christian country, if they cannot be cured. But are buildings all that are necessary to take care of the sick? There wants the heart and the hand — the trained and skillful hand. Every work-house and other hospital in the kingdom ought to be nursed by such hands and such hearts. Tell me, does not this seem like a truism?

What we meant by challenging England, if she is the most religious and the most com-

mercial country in the world, to do this work, is this: We do not say, as in Roman Catholic countries, the test of fitness to serve God in this way is whether He has given you private means sufficient to do it without pay. We say: The test is, whether you will be trained so as to command the highest pay. May we not hope that in this country our Lord, were He to come again, would say, instead of "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," — Ye can by serving God command that mammon necessary for the workers who must also eat — themselves and their families.

Let the religious motive be so strong that it will enable you to train yourself so as to earn the highest pay for the best work. The pay is offered; it is the trained workers we cannot find to be paid.

Thirty years ago, if a girl wished for training, there was none to be had. I can truly say there was no training to be had to fit a woman thoroughly for any life whatever. Now the training is offered, there are but few to take it.

We do not say, as was said to women in my day, Look about you, and see if you can catch painfully a few straws of practical experience or knowledge in the wind. We are not now inviting women to a life, without being able to show — Here is the training all ready, if you choose to

have it; here is an independent and well-paid calling waiting to receive you when you leave your training, if only you have fitted yourselves for it. I might say more than this; I might say we are beset with offers of places for trained nurses and trained superintendents, and we cannot fill them. I would I could go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in. How often I have known Pastor Fliedner, of Kaiserswerth (he is now gone to his glorious rest), say, when thus pressed by calls from pastors, and from directors of institutions, out of all parts of Germany, "You ask me for deaconesses. Has your district furnished us with any probationers? No; not one. Then, am I to give you the finished article, and you not to give me the live material? Am I to raise deaconesses out of the ground by a stamp of the foot?" That is what we, alas! feel often inclined to say when we are pressed from all parts of her Majesty's dominions, colonies included, in that empire "upon which the sun never sets."

I have spoken chiefly of work-house hospitals, and their want of trained nurses and trained superintendents, because I had to describe the work of her who was the first to try to fill the deep, yawning chasm, but not like Curtius, to close it up—and because it seemed the most crying want. But why do I call it so? To

answer the calls upon us for trained matrons or superintendents, as well as for trained nurses, for hospitals, and nursing institutions of all kinds, we can scarcely obtain anything like sufficient living materials. By all who have really labored in these and similar fields the same tale is told. People cry out and deplore the unremunerative employment for women. The true want is the other way. Women really trained, and capable for good work, can command any wages or salaries. We can't get the women. The remunerative employment is there, and in plenty. The want is the women fit to take it.

It is wonderful (to return to our own case of the hospitals), the absence of thought which exists upon this point. As if a woman could undertake hospital management, or the management of a single ward — in which, more than in anything else, hundreds, or even thousands, of lives are involved — without having learnt anything about it, any more than a man can undertake to be, for example, professor of mathematics without having learnt mathematics!

It is time to come to the dry bones of the affair, after having shown how beautifully these could be clothed in flesh and blood. We admit at St. Thomas' Hospital Training School — subject to the judgment of the matron, and subject to certain conditions being accepted or ful-

filled by the probationer — a limited number of probationers to be trained as nurses for the sick poor. Hitherto we have been compelled to confine ourselves to sending out staffs of nurses to hospitals or work-houses, with a view to their becoming, in their turn, centres of training, because the applications we receive for trained nurses are far more numerous and urgent than we have power to answer. But, did a greater number of probationers, suitable for superior situations, offer themselves, we could provide additional means for training, and answer applications for district nurses, and many others. These probationers receive board, lodging, training entirely free, a certain amount of uniform dress, and a small amount of pay, during their year of training.

For the efficiency, comfort, and success of a nursing staff thus sent out it is, of course, essential that the trained nurses should not go without the trained superintendent, nor the trained superintendent without the trained nurses.

There are two requisites in a superintendent: 1. Character and business capacity. 2. Training and knowledge. Without the second, the first is of little avail. Without the first, the second is only partially useful; for we can't bring out of a person what is not in her. *We* can only become responsible for the training. The other qualifica-

tions can only be known by trial. Now to take superintendents or head nurses, as is done every day, by receiving and comparing of testimonials (not a day's "Times" but shows this process in the vast majority of institutions) — this is hardly more to the purpose than to do as the Romans did, when they determined the course of conduct they should take by seeing whether there were a flight of crows.

The future superintendent would be a great deal the better for two years of training for so difficult and responsible a post. But such are the calls upon us that we can often give her scarcely one.

If the lady, in training for a superintendent, can pay for her own board, it is, of course, right that she should do so (everything else is, in all cases, given free). At the present time we are able to admit a few gentlewomen free of all expense, and with the small salary above mentioned during the year of training. We have applications from institutions in want of trained superintendents (or matrons), and trained head nurses for hospitals in India and in England, and for a large work-house infirmary.

In December we sent to New South Wales, by desire of the government there, which defrayed and assumed all expenses, to take charge of the Sydney Infirmary and to found a future

training school for the colony, five trained nurses and a trained lady-superintendent.

I give a quarter of a century's European experience when I say that the happiest people, the fondest of their occupation, the most thankful for their lives, are, in my opinion, those engaged in sick nursing. In my opinion, it is a mere abuse of words to represent the life, as is done by some, as a sacrifice and a martyrdom. But there *have* been martyrs in it. The founders and pioneers of almost everything that is best must be martyrs. But these are the last ever to think themselves so. And for all there must be constant self-sacrifice for the good of all. But the distinction is this — the life is not a sacrifice; it is the engaging in an occupation the happiest of any. But the strong, the healthy wills in any life must determine to pursue the common good at any personal cost — at daily sacrifice. And we must not think that any fit of enthusiasm will carry us through such a life as this. Nothing but the feeling that it is God's work more than ours — that we are seeking His success and not our success — and that we have trained and fitted ourselves by every means which He has granted us to carry out His work, will enable us to go on.

Three fourths of the whole mischief in women's lives arises from their excepting them-

selves from the rules of training considered needful for men.

And even with this thorough training, we shall have many moments of doubt, of dread, of discouragement. But yet the very pressure of the work of which the cares are so heavy, prevents us from having time to dwell on them.

The work has great consolations. It has also great disappointments, like every other noble work where you aim high: and if there has been one thing expressed to me more often and more strongly by her we have lost, it is what I have tried to say above.

I must end as I have begun, with my Una.

I cannot say in my weak words, what she used to tell as to her questionings: "Shall I be able ever to meet the dreariness, the disappointments, the isolation?" And the answer, "Not in my own strength, but in His; not for my work's sake, but for His." "My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in thy weakness." That answer of God to St. Paul, she realized in her daily life more than any one I ever knew.

She was peculiarly sensitive to little acts and words of kindness, and also of unkindness; and if a nosegay, a friendly letter, came to her in her times of overwork and discouragement, she would take it exactly as if it had been sent her by her

Father Himself. "I do not say to Him, Give success," she once said; "if all fails to human eyes, if I do nothing, 'not my way, but His be done; not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"

More completely and unreservedly than any one I ever knew, she gave herself: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word."

And it was so. What she went through during her work-house life is scarcely known but to God and to one or two. Yet she said that she had "never been so happy in all her life."

All the last winter she had under her charge above fifty nurses and probationers, above one hundred and fifty pauper scourers, from 1,290 to 1,350 patients, being from two to three hundred more than the number of beds. All this she had to provide for and arrange for, often receiving an influx of patients without a moment's warning. She had to manage and persuade the patients to sleep three and four in two beds; sometimes six, or even eight children had to be put in one bed; and being asked on one occasion whether they did not "kick one another," they answered, "O, no, ma'am, we're so comfor'ble." Poor little things, they scarcely remembered ever to have slept in a bed before. But this is not the usual run of work-house patients. Among them are the worn-

out old prostitutes, the worn-out old thieves, the worn-out old drunkards.

. . . . . .

And, if any one would know what are the lowest depths of human vice and misery, would see the festering mass of decay of living human bodies and human souls, and then would try what one loving soul filled with the spirit of her God can do to let in the light of God into this hideous well (worse than the well of Cawnpore), to bind up the wounds, to heal the broken-hearted, to bring release to the captives, — let her study the ways, and follow in the steps, of this one young, frail woman, who has died to show us the way — blessed in her death as in her life.

If anything ought to nerve the official crowd of the Poor-Law Board, and us women on the non-official side, to resolve on fighting this holy crusade until all the sick poor of these kingdoms are cared for as children of God, it is surely the fact that so precious a life has been sacrificed in discharging a duty which, if the country had recognized it as a duty, ought to have been unnecessary after three centuries of a Poor Law.

The last words spoken to her were, "You will soon be with your Saviour." Her reply was, "I shall be well there." And so she passed away. In her coffin she had that listening, beaming expression, peculiar to her in life, as if always

hearkening to the Master's bidding — in death as if hearing the words, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Years of previous action had prepared this young girl for her life of devotion. Her body was taken back to her own people to be buried in her father's vault.

All the old folks went out to meet her — old men and women of near ninety years of age who could scarcely move on crutches. The young men who had been her own scholars in her big boys' evening class, went a distance to meet the funeral, and carried in the coffin themselves. The school-children and school-mistresses gathered primroses and snow-drops and violets from all the county round, and brought these, and yew and ivy from the garden which she had planted for them herself. The whole district seemed to be there — at the grave of their dear one. But the hush of solemn silence was so great that they could hear the fall of the violets on the coffin. The grave was surrounded, — first by rows of school-children; behind them on one side the young women, on the other the young men of her Bible classes; and behind these again the elder women and men with whom she had read and prayed. She lay, after the service, completely strewn over with primroses and snow-drops showered upon her coffin. After all was

over, the school-children and mistresses sent a message to her poor sick paupers, that they would be glad to hear that their kind friend had been as gently laid in her grave as an infant laid to rest in its mother's arms.

It is proposed to erect on the spot where she died perhaps the grandest religious statue ever sculptured by mortal hands, Tenerani's "Angel of the Resurrection," as a fitting memorial of her work, and a type of the hope to come. Shall we not also build up living statues to her? Let *us* add living flowers to her grave, "lilies with full hands," — not fleeting primroses, not dying flowers. Let *us* bring the work of our hands, and our heads, and hearts, to finish her work which God has so blessed. Let her not merely "rest in peace," but let hers be the life which stirs up to fight the good fight against vice, and sin, and misery, and wretchedness, as she did — the call to arms, which she was ever obeying.

> "The Son of God goes forth to war:
> Who follows in his train?"

O daughters of God, are there so few to answer?

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

LONDON, 1868.

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